

You Think You're Alone Until You Realize You're In It **by Konstantya**

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Summary: Was it weird, she suddenly wondered, to stare at someone so intently while they slept? Carol had called him a creep because of the pictures he'd taken, but in that moment, was she, Nancy, really any better? (Takes place during 1x06. Missing scene/character study. Slight Jancy.)

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You know...it can't get us in here, he'd said, and she'd responded with a frightfully honest, *We don't know that*. And then Jonathan—apparently unable to deny the logic of those words—had turned on his side, tucked his hand into the covers, and wrapped his fingers around the revolver he'd stolen from his dad.

She'd felt his eyes on her—maybe wondering, maybe worried—but he hadn't said anything else, and neither had she. After all, what exactly *did* you say to a boy who you were very emphatically not dating, but who had pulled you from a parallel dimension and was now sleeping in your bed? That just wasn't the sort of situation they gave advice for in *Seventeen Magazine*.

It was strange and wrong—especially since he *wasn't* her boyfriend, especially since this was *Jonathan Byers*, her brother's friend's weirdo older brother—but she'd wanted him to wrap an arm around her, then. To cradle her back against his chest, like she'd wanted Steve to do after they'd had sex. But Steve had fallen asleep, and it seemed Jonathan had too, if the slow, even breaths beside her were anything to go by. The insecure part of Nancy flared; was she really so dull and demure, that she could consistently bore boys into unconsciousness?

Which was unfair to herself, and she knew it. Steve was, well, *Steve*, and had been reeling from alcohol and an orgasm to boot. And Jonathan was...just tired, she suspected. And hadn't suffered nearly as severe a scare as she had. She couldn't really blame him for getting whatever rest he could.

With that thought, she dared to look over at him. His right hand was still tucked in the comforter, his hair was spread haphazardly across his forehead, and—as was often the case with people when they slept—he looked younger, the lines of his face free of their usual distrust

and defensiveness. A lot of the girls at school considered him ugly, and truth be told she had too, but she could see now that that wasn't exactly the case. Oh, sure, he was no Tom Cruise or Patrick Swayze or even Steve Harrington, but Jonathan Byers had his own esoteric, not-entirely-unattractive features all the same: high cheekbones, a straight nose, a surprisingly solid chin, downright nice lips... Honestly, if he could do away with the terrible haircut, get a good night's sleep and maybe some Clearasil, he'd probably be pretty cute. He might not even have to stop listening to those bizarre bands he liked or start wearing brighter clothes to get girls to notice him.

Was it weird, she suddenly wondered, to stare at someone so intently while they slept? Carol had called him a creep because of the pictures he'd taken, but in that moment, was she, Nancy, really any better? He'd said he was just looking for his little brother that night, and if anyone were to ask, she'd say she was just too scared to sleep right then, but were either statements entirely accurate? Rather than think about it, she turned her mind back to those fateful photographs.

They'd been a shock, to say the least. She and Jonathan had never been friends exactly, but they were connected through their brothers, and had even been known to exchange the odd word or two on the occasions he'd come by to pick Will up from her house. Nothing major, usually just the requisite "hey," once some small (*very small*) talk about the single class they shared, and while it was true he always struck her as awkward and introverted, he'd never actually struck her as a *freak*, as their peers so liked to label him. Certainly not a *pervert*. Not until...

But lumped in with that unsettling exercise in voyeurism had been the picture of Barb, and Nancy had put aside her newfound wariness long enough to seek him out—at *Liedel's Funeral Home* of all places, where he was shopping for *his brother's casket*...

A part of her still regretted that—her own insensitivity that day. But despite that, he'd still talked to her, still *listened* to her, and then—when she'd brought the subject up in the darkroom—he'd actually gone one step further and apologized. No excuses, no elaborate attempt to explain himself, just a soft, simple, *I shouldn't have taken that. I'm sorry*. It didn't make his actions okay, but it—along with his shy confession of why he liked photography in the first place—went a

long way in letting her know that his intentions, at least, hadn't been dirty or depraved; it seemed he just got a little too caught up in his own head at times, and didn't realize how things might look from an outside perspective until it was too late.

So he wasn't a creep, she concluded (his barbed words about her apparently pathetic attempt at teenage rebellion notwithstanding, but that seemed like a churlish thing to focus on at this point). After all, creeps didn't apologize so sweetly and sincerely after invading your privacy. Creeps didn't gently take you home after a traumatic experience, and then hang around just to make sure you were okay. Creeps didn't respectfully lie on top of the covers when you asked them to sleep next to you, and especially didn't even more respectfully first try to take the floor.

Did creeps stare at kind, awkward boys as they slept?

Probably.

Nancy sighed and turned her gaze back to the ceiling. Maybe she should follow his lead and try to get some rest. She'd heard her parents come in a while ago from their night out, her little sister in tow, and she suspected it was getting near midnight now. With another sigh, she steeled herself and closed her eyes. Immediately her heart rate began to speed up, and on the black canvas behind her lids, all she could see was that *place*, its darkness and decay, and—

Her eyes snapped back open.

So much for trying to sleep. She swallowed and took a few deep breaths to calm herself, pulling her comforter a little closer to her neck.

God, what she wouldn't give for a hug right now.

She looked back over at Jonathan, vaguely remembering—through the haze of the panic she'd been in the midst of—the way his arms had felt around her in the woods. It might have been strange and wrong, but to hell with it—she would have been lying if she said she didn't want his arms back around her in that moment.

It was a futile wish if she'd ever had one. Even supposing she could work up the nerve to turn toward him and snuggle her way into his embrace, they'd arguably crossed too many lines that night already. To say nothing of the gun that was still physically between them.

Still... Still, it was only his right hand that was occupied... His left lay empty next to his head, upturned and loosely closed. His nails were clipped short and his palm looked soft. Nancy pressed her lips together, wanting.

Her best friend was missing; it was late; she was scared. Plenty enough reason to crave a little comfort. Plenty enough justification in the event he awoke. Mind made up, Nancy carefully turned on her side, so that she was fully facing him. She bit her lip, her heart pounding, and then carefully, carefully tucked the tips of her fingers into his hand. His skin was warm, and she waited, watching his face for any reaction, but his eyelashes didn't even flutter against his cheeks. Gathering her boldness, she tucked her fingers in further, until they were spanning the entire width of his palm.

That got a reaction. He stirred slightly, his fingers momentarily curling around hers, and his head turned into the bed a bit more, causing his mouth to press rather adorably against her pillow. Nancy let a small smile come to her own lips at that, and breathed more lightly than she perhaps had all evening.

Maybe she wouldn't be able to sleep that night, but at least she knew she wasn't alone.

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A/N: OH HEY, TWO YEARS LATE I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN INTO THIS SERIES.

I'm sure this scene/idea has been done to death, but I still wanted to do my own take on it. I need more non-explicit fics exploring

Jonathan's voyeuristic side, and nothing can convince me that Nancy didn't indulge in her own bout of voyeurism that night, so.

Title from "Watching the Detectives" by Elvis Costello.

Thanks for reading!